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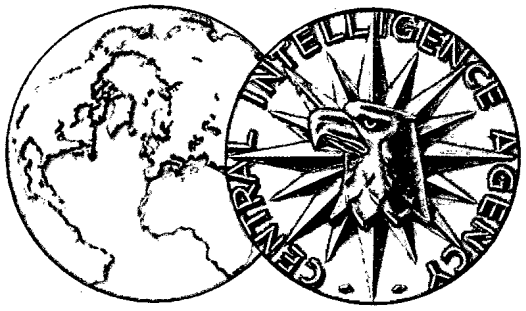
COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN BURMA



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COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN BURMA

SUMMARY

Only since the end of World War II has Communism become an important factor in Burmese politics. For a short period after the war Communists dominated the most influential political organization in Burma, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL). They were outmaneuvered, however, by non-Communist elements, split into two factions and eliminated from the League and the government it sponsored. Nevertheless, the relatively few Communists retain considerable popular support, partly because of the widespread appeal of Marxism in contemporary Burmese politics, and exert an influence far out of proportion to their actual numbers.

Both the Burma Communist Party (BCP) and the Communist Party (Burma) (CPB) are now in armed rebellion against the Burmese Government. The Burma Communist Party (BCP), by far the larger and more influential, has shown increasing conformity to the Moscow line, and has of late given indications of being influenced by Chinese Communist policies. Communist elements have contributed heavily to the prevailing political and economic instability in Burma. They have exploited the instability to extend their influence and to seek new allies in an attempt to develop a popular front through which to achieve their ultimate objective—undisputed control of Burma. The BCP is known to have maintained liaison with the Communist Party of India, and is believed to be in sporadic contact with the Chinese Communist Party and Communist elements in Indochina. No direct contact with the Soviets has been proved. The Communist Party (Burma) (CPB) is a distinct but weak organization which harasses both the government and the BCP.

Government measures against the Communists have not yet been very successful. Although the government possesses superior manpower and material resources, it is not likely to be able to suppress the Communist insurrections in the near future and prolonged guerrilla warfare is probable. On the other hand, the Communists appear incapable of overthrowing the government without considerable outside assistance. (The establishment of a Communist regime in China coupled with the possible emergence of a Communist regime in Indochina would strongly impel the Burmese to accommodate themselves to Communism.) Effective utilization of Western assistance by the Burmese Government, which in turn is largely contingent upon the settlement of the Karen rebellion, might enable it to establish itself as the popular advocate of nationalism and improved conditions in Burma and at the same time identify the Communists as proponents of violence acting under foreign instruction. Acceptance and use of such assistance would present the government with the complex and delicate problem of convincingly refuting charges of subservience to foreign interests. Furthermore, the speed at which adverse events are taking place in China leaves little time in Burma to promote developments favorable to the West.

Although they are largely indirect and derive from effects of the situation in Burma on neighboring areas where the US has more direct and significant interests, the implications of a Communist-dominated or inclined Burma are significant to US security.

Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report. It is based on information available to CIA as of 15 December 1949.

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COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN BURMA

1. Communism in Burma: Present Status and Future Prospects.

Although a relatively small minority hampered by factionalism and apparently losing some support, Burmese Communists remain an important force in Burmese politics and are making a violent effort to overthrow the existing government and establish their own administration. While both Communist parties are effectively advancing the short term Soviet objective of creating chaotic conditions, the BCP is considerably stronger and more advanced in ideological sophistication. The BCP has demonstrated its willingness to follow the international Communist policy and to execute instructions from foreign sources. It probably will continue to do both, at least as long as foreign control is relatively well concealed, local control left largely in the hands of indigenous Communists, and the objectives of Communist policy remain substantially compatible with those of extreme nationalism. Despite its organizational weaknesses and the possibility of increasing internal factionalism, the BCP is still capable of prolonged violence and of implementing its more immediate objectives of promoting unrest in Burma, disrupting its economy, and in general undermining the authority of the existing regime. Although constituting a continuing threat to Burmese stability, it is unlikely that the BCP will overthrow the government in the immediate future through its own unaided efforts. The probability of the emergence of a Communist-dominated regime will steadily increase, however, as Communist control of China is consolidated. This will become still more likely if, in the meantime, the Burmese Government fails to eliminate some of its glaring weaknesses, fails to come to terms with as many as possible of the various other insurgent groups, particularly the Karens, and fails to improve the conditions of the Burmese people. The Chinese Communists will be in a position to place strong and varied pressures upon the Burmese people and their government. Their very presence on the undefended borders of northern Burma, with its implied threat of overwhelming force, alone is likely to cause many Burmese to reassess their attitude toward the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Chinese Communists could extend matériel and advisory and technical assistance to their Burmese counterparts which, in time, might enable the latter to replace the existing regime. In addition, the Chinese Communists will, in all probability, attempt to influence the Burmese Government by exploiting the pro-PRC tendencies of the Chinese community in Burma and of various non-insurrectionary elements in Burmese politics, including an important faction of the Burma Socialist Party, the majority party in the Burmese Parliament. Finally, the possible emergence of Communist regimes in Indochina or other Southeast Asian countries would provide even greater impetus toward a Burmese accommodation to Communism.

Although there are indications that the Chinese Communists are directly interested in the activities of the Burmese Communists and occasionally in contact with them, Chinese Communist agents have apparently devoted the greater part of their energies to winning the support of the 250-300,000 Chinese in Burma. In this respect they have enjoyed considerable success as most of the Chinese community is suspected of being at least opportunistically or passively sympathetic to the Chinese Communist movement. While Chinese Communist agitators and organizers are known to be active in Burma, many of their activities, both covert and overt, are carried out by the China Democratic League (CDL) which is reputed to maintain amicable relations with an influential section of the important Burma Socialist Party.

From the evidence at hand, it is believed that Chinese Communist policy toward

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Burma is only in the earliest stages of development. It appears that Chinese Communists are attempting to take advantage of the leftist tendencies of various Burmese political factions and to curry favor wherever possible in the hope of the emergence, perhaps under Chinese influence, of a popular front in support of a government favorably disposed towards a Communist China. An immediate objective would seem to be consolidation of the Chinese population in Burma under firm Communist direction with a view to its use later as a means of achieving Communist objectives in Burma. Another objective seems to be the creation of sympathy for the Chinese movement by attempting to allay Burmese animosity toward Chinese and fear of Chinese domination. The third and final objective, naturally, is Communist control of Burma. Such objectives may explain the Chinese Communists' avoidance of becoming directly involved in Burmese affairs and their concentration upon the resident Chinese. At the same time, the Chinese Communists are free to deal with the Burmese Communists, while the "separate and distinct" CDL can approach other political elements, including those supporting the government, without alienating potential supporters on either side.

Although the Burmese Government has taken little action against the Chinese Communists in Burma except to arrest a few Chinese suspected of contacting Burmese Communists, it is attempting to suppress indigenous Communists by legal and military force as well as by advancing a social and political program designed to undermine the appeal of Communism. However, the lack of uniformity and the irresponsibility that mark governmental counteractions largely negate the effectiveness of such a policy. In addition, the government has been severely handicapped by a seemingly endless series of obstacles, many of which are not of its own making. Militarily, the government's armed forces are superior to those of the Communists in terms of manpower and matériel, but they have been severely handicapped by lack of experience, large-scale desertions, the necessity of having to import practically all military supplies, limited funds, political interferences, difficult terrain, and the absence of an efficient transportation and communications system. Perhaps the most serious weakness derives from the necessity to disperse government forces over widespread areas in order to fight a variety of insurgents in addition to the Communists. Despite these serious difficulties, the government has tended to ignore the advice of the British Military Mission in Burma. The government appears capable of containing the situation as long as the various rebel groups remain divided and mutually antagonistic. Nevertheless, widespread disorders, due in large measure to Communist activity, are resulting in a drastic reduction of government revenues while at the same time forcing greatly increased non-productive military expenditures and precluding effective administration.

Shortly after becoming independent, the government enthusiastically launched a far-reaching program designed to provide the Burmese with political freedom and economic security without bloodshed. While such a program has probably cushioned the impact of Communist propaganda, shortages of resources, qualified personnel, and much corruption have prevented its successful implementation, thus providing the Communists with propaganda ammunition from another direction.

Recently, the Burmese Government appears to have become increasingly aware of its inability to promote peace and prosperity through its own efforts. Its policies have shifted noticeably from the extreme left toward a more moderate position. It has shown a consequent tendency to seek the support of the US and UK, and of nearby Commonwealth countries. India and the UK have provided Burma with some military supplies, but the Burmese rejected a project for joint financial assistance by the UK, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon on the ground that the conditions were too restrictive. The government has also sponsored legislation designed to attract, rather than discourage, foreign capital for

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the development of mineral resources, and has shown interest in Point Four of President Truman's inaugural address. The Prime Minister has recommended negotiation of mutually beneficial treaties with nations having "common interests," and the Foreign Minister has indicated Burma's willingness to join a non-Communist Pacific bloc, provided China and Korea were not included. Socialist reaction to these changes in policy has been one of reluctant acquiescence, and since the Socialists are the government's chief supporters, they could precipitate a serious political crisis at any time. Withdrawal of their support could mean the government's resignation, a split in the Socialist Party, or both. Although such developments are entirely possible, it seems likely that the parties concerned realize the disastrous consequences that would probably result, and will attempt to avoid them at least temporarily. Furthermore, the government, despite the fact that many of its supporters are extreme leftists, seems to have recognized that hasty implementation of a far-reaching socialist program would be impracticable, if not disastrous. The new trend in Burmese policies, therefore, indicates that Burmese leaders are at last discovering that Communism is a real threat to their security and are turning to the West as the only source which can provide the necessary assistance for economic rehabilitation and restoration of internal stability which are prerequisite to the security of Burmese political independence.

Although Communism in Burma will not be suppressed in the predictable future, the government, if it is to restore political stability, must intensify considerably its efforts to establish itself in the minds of the Burmese as the true advocate of nationalism and of better conditions in Burma while identifying the Communists as the proponents of violence, acting under foreign instructions. In addition, some kind of negotiated settlement will have to be reached with other insurgents and greater confidence and assistance obtained from the various hill people who heretofore have generally been suspicious of the Burmese Government in Rangoon. These efforts must be undertaken by the Burmese themselves, and the prospects for their fulfillment are not especially bright. In any event, the government is increasingly dependent upon Western support and assistance, and its willingness and ability to resist Communism may well be proportionate to the encouragement received from this source. Efforts to obtain such aid without exposing itself to charges of subservience to foreign interests will be a delicate procedure.

2. Implications to US Security of a Communist Burma.

The implications of a Communist-dominated or inclined Burma are significant to US security. However, such implications are, generally speaking, indirect and are best expressed in terms of their effect upon areas where the US has more direct and significant interests.

A Communist government in Burma would obviously curtail severely Western influence in still another Far Eastern area. Aside from the further loss of Western prestige, Communist sway over Burma would further endanger India and Pakistan. Moral and matériel support could then be more easily extended to the Communist movements in those countries, especially in Assam and West Bengal where the Communist Party of India (CPI) has been particularly active, and to East Pakistan where the Communists, under the direction of the CPI, appear to be making their strongest bid for promoting subversion in the Dominion of Pakistan. Furthermore, such a development, particularly if coupled with the emergence of a pro-Soviet Government in Indochina, would constitute a direct threat to the present regimes in Thailand and Malaya.

Communist activities in Burma have been an important contributing factor in preventing Burmese rice exports from attaining more than approximately one-third their prewar levels and in paralyzing other export industries.* Decreased Burmese rice exports are

* The most important being petroleum, timber, lead, tin and tungsten, although the production of these commodities is relatively insignificant in terms of world production.

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directly reflected in the currently low ration levels of India, Ceylon, Malaya, and Japan and in the high prices those countries must pay for imported foodstuffs. Thus the situation in Burma directly affects the stability of areas where US political, economic, and strategic interests are clearly apparent. Control of Burma could provide the Communists, in their struggle for all Asia, with an important economic weapon in the form of the pressures they could exert in other areas through control of Burmese rice surpluses.

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APPENDIX

COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN BURMA

1. The Genesis of Communism in Burma.

Although a few Burmans, mostly university students, were inspired by Communist literature and participated in sporadic Communistic activities during the mid-thirties, there was no formally organized Communist Party until 1944. The development of a cohesive Communist movement began in 1942, when Communist-inclined Burmese began organizing popular opposition to the Japanese and advocated unqualified support of the Allies. Because they were instrumental in organizing and directing the Burmese resistance to the Japanese, the Communists emerged from the war well-organized and with their prestige and popularity greatly enhanced.

In August 1944, the Communists were primarily responsible for the amalgamation of various elements of the Resistance into the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), the dominant political force in Burmese politics at the war's end. Communists held key positions in the AFPFL, and the Burma Communist Party (BCP) constituted the League's largest and best-organized component. Although the BCP dominated the AFPFL until early 1946, it never achieved complete control. The Communists at that time made a strenuous effort to gain control of the AFPFL by conducting an intense campaign to strengthen the party and to broaden its popular base. Gradually, however, its drive for power encountered anti-Communist sentiment within the AFPFL, and a non-Communist group, with considerable adroitness, split the BCP and forced the withdrawal from the League of both factions.

The two Communist groups thereupon became the first effectively organized opposition to the AFPFL. The Communist Party (Burma) (CPB), popularly called Red Flags, was organized in March 1946 and commenced a campaign of violence almost from that date. Although the Burma Communist Party (BCP) (commonly referred to as the White Flags) also instigated unrest after withdrawing from the AFPFL in November 1946, it temporarily avoided overt violence. Rather, it sought a rapprochement with the AFPFL and might have succeeded had it not insisted upon unconditional acceptance of its terms.

In February 1948, acting on orders believed to have been transmitted by the Soviet Ambassador in New Delhi through the Communist Party of India, the BCP radically altered its policies and embarked upon a program of extreme agitation directed against the AFPFL and the government it sponsored. The Communist press immediately began a campaign of abuse and vilification; BCP leaders openly advocated overthrowing the government; a series of strikes developed, and there were indications that the BCP planned to establish its own administration over the areas of central Burma which it dominated. On 28 March 1948, the government finally took action by forcibly breaking the strikes and arresting as many Communists as possible. All important BCP leaders escaped, however, and a full-fledged Communist-led insurrection soon commenced under their direction.

The growth of the Burmese Communist movement, in a short period, from one of insignificance to one capable of seriously challenging the constituted national authority, may be attributed to a number of causes. The general disorganization of Burmese society, economic hardship, foreign rule, and the inability of Burmans to participate in the development of their country led to the development of intense nationalism, as well as strong antipathy towards capitalism. The Communists' initiative in organizing the resistance permitted them to capitalize upon the popularity of Communist leaders after the war and

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to identify Communism with nationalism. During the early postwar period superior organization and a well-defined party program, with easy promises and simple explanations of Burmese grievances, gave the Communists a significant initial advantage over other political groups. Since their break with the AFPFL, the Communists have capitalized upon endemic lawlessness and the characteristic Burman distrust of governmental authority by exploiting the numerous weaknesses and shortcomings of the AFPFL and the Burmese Government. In some cases, they have profited by certain of the government's anti-Communist measures which have injured the innocent as well as the guilty. Finally, the outbreak of the Peoples Volunteer Organization (PVO) and Karen * rebellions have provided the Communists with new opportunities to extend their influence by seeking new allies to augment their own efforts for the overthrow of the existing regime.

2. The Burma Communist Party (White Flags).

a. Organization.

The organization of the BCP appears to parallel that of other Communist parties throughout the world. Supreme authority, both political and military, is vested in a three-man Politburo theoretically elected and responsible to a Central Committee, which, in turn, is accountable to periodic Party Congresses. No Party Congress has been held since February 1948. Below the national level, the Communists established Upper and Lower Burma commands over District organizations supervised by District Secretaries-General and Central Committees. There is evidence that the Communist organization is further subdivided into township and village groups and that separate units, perhaps on the district level of importance, are maintained in Rangoon, and possibly Mandalay.

BCP organizational problems have undoubtedly been complicated by the necessity of operating underground. Effectiveness of BCP command functions varies from area to area and from group to group, and is often not too satisfactory. It probably also is hampered by personal rivalries and the independent tendencies of local leaders. Nevertheless, the BCP continues to function with reasonable efficiency and continues capable of maintaining pressure on the government and of expanding its activities whenever an opportunity is presented.

b. Leadership.

The BCP's leader is its Secretary General, Thakin Than Tun. Than Tun emerged as an important Communist and in the 1930's, rose to prominence in the resistance movement, and was Secretary-General of the AFPFL until three months before the Communists withdrew. Of all the Burmese Communists, Than Tun probably best understands Communist ideology and its applicability to Burma. Although not a particularly dynamic leader, Than Tun has demonstrated his ability to hew to the orthodox party line and has considerable capacity for organization and administration. If recent publications in the Soviet press are any indication, his leadership has the sanction of the Kremlin, and his party is recognized as the "official" Communist Party in Burma.

With few exceptions, other BCP functionaries are young men whose individual capabilities cannot be accurately assessed. Few of these have more than a superficial understanding of Communism, especially of its inherent danger to Burmese sovereignty. There are indications that although BCP unity, discipline, and morale appear to remain adequate, they have declined somewhat in recent months largely as a result of personal rivalries which tend to develop factionalism in the party, and the inconveniences of having to operate underground. Nevertheless, these difficulties have not reached disruptive proportions, and there are no indications that the Communists, by and large, intend to digress from their present course.

c. Strength and Distribution.

Judging from the limited information available, actual membership of the BCP probably does not exceed a few thousand. The BCP's

* For further information regarding the PVO and the Karens see ORE 35-49, "The Current Situation in Burma."

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influence, however, is substantially greater than its numerical strength would indicate. It commands a considerable popular following (perhaps several hundred thousand) throughout a large part of Burma, especially in those rural areas of central and southern Burma where it has exercised more or less *de facto* control since the end of the war.

Before going underground, the BCP attempted, with considerable success, to gain the support of peasants, laborers, and youth through its front organizations, the All-Burma Peasants Union, the All-Burma Trade Union Congress, and the People's Democratic Youth League (also known as the Red Guards, which apparently formed the nucleus of the BCP's military forces). It is from these organizations that the Communists probably draw the bulk of their present support, and one of them, the All-Burma Trade Union Congress, is still functioning openly in government-controlled areas. In addition, the Communists have promoted some unrest and defections in the military and police forces, have exploited the pro-Communist sympathies of the PVO, and have infiltrated and influenced several important non-Communist political and cultural organizations.

Avowed Communist publications have been suspended, but the BCP still produces handbills and pamphlets which are circulated freely, even in Rangoon. In addition, some left-wing newspapers and a number of ultra-leftist authors continue to publish party-line material, although they refrain from severely criticizing the government. Communist literature may also be obtained from a People's Literature House in Rangoon which is known to have been established and partially financed by the Communist Party of India.

The BCP has made strenuous efforts to develop new front organizations in many parts of Burma, the most successful thus far being the formation of a coalition, known as the People's Democratic Front (PDF), which includes an undetermined number of PVO's and army mutineers who had been conducting their own more or less independent rebellions. This organization is potentially an extremely serious threat to the restoration of stability in Burma under a non-Communist regime. While the BCP controls only relatively small and scattered areas throughout southern Burma, the PDF dominates considerable territory along the Irrawaddy River valley and has a fairly large and well-armed military force at its disposal. The PDF, however, appears to suffer from a faulty command structure, there is evidence of friction among its components, and its lasting qualities remain to be demonstrated. Nevertheless, the PDF is the "popular front" type of organization without which it is highly unlikely that the BCP could achieve domination of Burma.

d. Military Activities.

BCP military activities are conducted primarily by small guerrilla bands in widely separated areas. These bands are well supplied with Japanese, British, and US small arms. While the Communists have captured numerous poorly defended towns and villages, they have been unable to hold a given position against determined government attack and have avoided engaging in pitched battles wherever possible. Although numerically and materially weaker than the government forces, the Communists enjoy such advantages as favorable terrain, extreme maneuverability, and a capacity to lose their identity among local populations. Furthermore, they are opposed by limited and inexperienced government forces which must cope with other insurgents and are incapable of giving adequate and continuing protection except in selected centers of population. Consequently, the BCP has not been suppressed, nor is it likely to be in the predictable future.

The ultimate objective of the BCP's military campaign is to wrest political power from any existing non-Communist regime. Until the BCP can develop a force capable of making a successful frontal assault upon the government, however, it must continue to confine itself to guerrilla tactics as the best means of undermining the government's authority and aggravating national instability.

Military relations between the BCP and other insurgent groups are obscure, largely because of the difficulty often encountered in identifying the participants in any given en-

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gagement. There are strong indications that on several occasions, because of the general Burman antipathy towards the Karens, the BCP has cooperated with government and PVO forces against the Karens. In other cases, the Communists are reported to have avoided fighting the Karens, or even to have entered into tactical cooperation in local operations against the government. Despite government allegations, there is very little evidence of premeditated or widespread cooperation between the BCP and the Karens. In fact, the Karens have been most emphatic in their condemnation of Communism. There have been clashes between BCP and CPB, and it is believed that the mutual animosity of the two Communist groups is bitter and deep-seated. Despite the formation of the PDF and Communist efforts to avoid antagonizing the PVO, there have also been conflicts between the two and there are indications of friction within the framework of the PDF over the matters of spheres of influence and local leadership.

e. Plans and Policies.

BCP policies, originally based almost entirely on nationalism and virtually identical to those of the AFPFL, have latterly tended to conform increasingly to the Moscow line. Nevertheless, the primary source of friction between the BCP and the Socialist-dominated AFPFL may be traced to AFPFL efforts to attain national independence and implement a socialist program without resorting to violence, rather than to any profound ideological differences. For example, the Anglo-Burmese Treaty, which includes important concessions to the UK in return for independence, has become the chief target of BCP propaganda attacks upon the Burmese Government. For obligating Burma to honor foreign debts, to pay compensation for nationalized foreign property, and to accept a British Military Mission, the BCP accuses the AFPFL's "right wing" of accepting sham independence. Steadily deteriorating conditions in Burma have forced the government to seek relief by modifying its extreme socialist policies and seeking closer relations with the West, thus providing the BCP with new propaganda material.

The most recent expression of BCP policies appears in the March 1949 manifesto announcing the formation of the PDF, which, although signed by representatives of all participating elements, undoubtedly was written by the Communists. It presents a comprehensive politico-economic program which generally conforms to the international "party line" and in many respects is strikingly similar to the policies of the Chinese Communist Party, particularly those propounded during the earlier days of the Chinese revolution. According to the manifesto, the first objective is development of the PDF into an effective political and military organization.

The primary goals of the PDF are the overthrow of the present government and the establishment of a People's Democratic Republican State based upon a new "People's Democratic" constitution. Under the new administration, peasants and workers are promised extensive privileges; freedom of speech, assembly, writing, and religion are guaranteed—so long as they are not used as political instruments—and a "broad" program of nationalization and industrialization is envisaged without the aid of "Anglo-American expansionists."

The new government intends to repudiate all foreign debts, abrogate the Anglo-Burmese Treaty and any others "signed against the interest of the nation," and wage a continuous struggle against Anglo-American "expansionism." It will not accept assistance that would affect adversely Burma's political, economic or military interests (according to its own interpretation of Burma's interests) but would be willing to establish friendly relations with any country on a "reciprocal and equal" basis. It will negotiate freely with other "People's Democratic" states in the interest of "world peace."

Of interest also is the BCP's attitude towards the more conservative and backward ethnic minorities, particularly the Karens. The PDF manifesto states that, although the feudal systems of the hill people must be replaced with a "people's" administration, these

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people are entitled to equal rights with all other peoples in Burma, including those of autonomy and secession. The Karen rebellion is attributed to imperialist machinations, and the PDF is charged with "smashing" the Karen rebellion while the Karen "masses" are called upon to repudiate their leaders and join the Burman "masses" in order to shape their own destiny along "democratic" principles.

While BCP intentions are clear, the realization of their ambitions has not progressed beyond the earliest stages. The conference at which the PDF was founded was marked by a considerable disagreement. The PVO subsequently is reported to have held a meeting of its own to develop a unified policy and prevent further fragmentation. Furthermore, there are indications of growing suspicion of the Communists within the PDF as well as the development of personal jealousies. Nevertheless, the BCP has succeeded, temporarily at least, in forming a popular front dominated by Than Tun and now may make efforts gradually to incorporate those revolutionaries still operating independently. As a result, although internal dissensions appear to have prevented the BCP from fully exploiting its gains, Communist capabilities in Burma were appreciably enhanced.

f. Foreign Contacts.

The BCP is known to have maintained fairly extensive liaison with the Communist Party of India and is suspected of having sporadic contact with the Chinese Communist Party and Communist elements in Indochina. No direct contact with Soviet agents or the USSR has been proved, and, if such contacts exist, they are indirect.

The extent of foreign control over the BCP is still an unresolved question. Strong foreign influence (Chinese and Soviet) is discernible in its propaganda which reflects growing compliance with Soviet policy. Although Than Tun has denied the charge of foreign dictation, he has publicly stated that (a) the Communist uprising in Burma is allied with similar movements elsewhere in the world which recognize the leadership of Soviet Russia, and (b) that there were many Indians and Chinese in the BCP, some of whom had been "elected" leaders by the masses. The BCP therefore has demonstrated its amenability to foreign "advice," at least on policy and it would doubtless accept material assistance with alacrity. However, it is entirely probable that direct foreign intervention such as usurping authority in the implementation of Soviet or Chinese Communist policy, or occupation would alienate large numbers of local adherents to the Communist movement in Burma.

3. Communist Party (Burma) (Red Flag).

The CPB appears to have degenerated from a fairly strong organization into numerous uncoordinated anarchist and bandit gangs operating without principles or clearcut objectives. (This loss of cohesiveness may be due largely to the long incarceration of its leader, Thakin Soe, but may be rectified somewhat now that he is reported to be once again at large.) In terms of members, popular support, and insurrectionary potential the CPB is considerably weaker than the BCP. Although the CPB has been responsible for some disturbances in central and southern Burma, it has been most active in Arakan, which forms the western coastal area of Burma. However, even in Arakan, it is questionable how much of the unrest is attributable to the CPB, and how much to Arakanese separatists. The CPB's policies, if any actually exist, are at best vague generalizations along the lines of theoretical Marxism. Militarily, the CPB violently opposes the government, the PVO, and the BCP, the latter being considered opportunistic and compromising. Although the CPB advocates cooperating with the Karens, it appears to have had little if any success. So far as is known the CPB does not maintain any foreign contacts. All things considered, the CPB remains a dangerous organization, capable of prolonging the general unrest in Burma, but not of unseating the government through its own unaided efforts.

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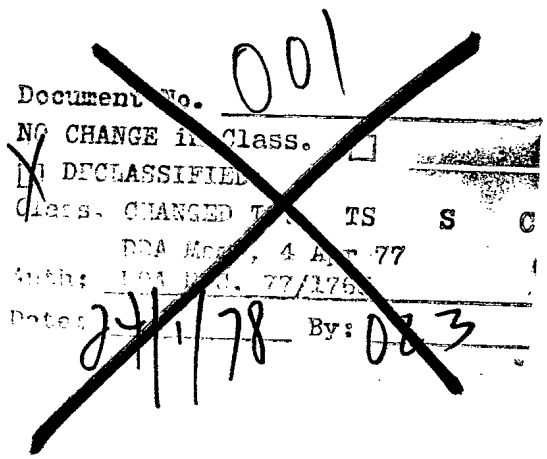

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